

Mississippi's farmers and producers are the backbone of our states most important industry: agriculture. From sweet potatoes to cotton, North Mississippi farmers work hard every day to provide the products on which we all depend. I am committed to helping create a sustainable, affordable, and abundant agricultural industry. I was proud to help overturn the President's veto and pass the 2008 Farm Bill which includes many important provisions, such as loan guarantee programs and farm subsidy updates. I look forward to continuing to fight for Mississippi's agriculture community.

In addition, currently I am the only member of the Mississippi delegation serving on the House Agriculture Committee and I am proud to serve on two subcommittees: **Subcommittee on Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition, and Forestry** and **Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management.**

Agriculture Legislation

2008 Farm Bill:

Last Congress I helped to override the President's veto of the 2008 Farm Bill which included many important provisions for Mississippi's farmers:

Ensuring Food Security

- Nutrition programs increased by \$10.361 billion with appropriate benefit increases that are indexed to the cost of living
- Vital assistance to food banks increased by \$1.25 billion

- New funding boosts organic agriculture, fruit and vegetable programs, and local food networks
- Country-of-origin labeling for meat and produce made mandatory

Promoting Homegrown Renewable Energy

- Provides \$1 billion to fund programs that will help the renewable energy industry
- Invest in new technologies that use a variety of sources beyond feed grains.
- Corn ethanol tax credit reduced and redirected to incentives for cellulosic ethanol
- Creates a loan guarantee program and a program to encourage and develop production of dedicated energy crops
- Bioenergy research increased and renewable energy programs expanded

Reforming Farm Programs

- Farm program safety net extended and modernized, with an updated adjusted gross income means test for commodity programs
- Farm and conservation program transparency increased, with direct attribution of payments and the ending of practices that result in multiple payment eligibility
- Crop insurance reformed to prevent windfall reimbursements to crop insurance companies
- Budgeted standing disaster assistance program for crops stricken by catastrophic natural disasters such as drought and flood

Protecting the Environment

- Conservation program spending increased by \$7.9 billion
- Doubles funding for the Farm Protection Program to protect agricultural lands from urban and suburban development pressure
- Increases funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Conservation Stewardship Program to enhance and protect our natural resources
- Continues funding for Grassland Reserve and Wetlands Reserve programs
- Creates an Open Fields Program to encourage public access to private land for hunting and fishing as well as a Chesapeake Bay program to help restore and protect the Bay watershed

As the 111th Congress gets underway the interpretation and implementation of the provisions included in the Farm Bill by the USDA will be of increasing concern to Mississippi's entire Agriculture Community. I am committed to working with the USDA and Mississippi's farmers to ensure that the bill is interpreted fairly. Recently several issues have arisen in regards to the USDA and its implementation of the Farm Bill. This includes the aggregation of base acreage and the CRP programs for Grazing and Haying.

The recently passed Farm Bill contains a provision that eliminates direct payments, counter-cyclical payments and average crop revenue election payments on any farm with a sum of less than 10 base acres (Section 1101(d)).] The Agriculture Committee provided a statement to further clarify to this provision by stating: "The Manager's intent for the Department to allow for aggregation of farms for purposes of determining the suspension of payments on farms with 10 base acres or less." However, last year it came to the Agriculture Committee's attention that Farm Service Agency offices across the country are not allowing farmers to aggregate these acres as intended by Congress.

I and other members of the Committee sent a letter to the USDA urging the agency to implement this provision as Congress intended and provide immediate instruction to FSA offices to allow aggregation for farms with less than 10 acres. On September 25, 2008 **I helped to pass HR 6849 eliminating the 10 base acre provision for the 2008 and 2009 crop seasons and allowing farmers to qualify for commodity assistance and payments.** I was also a cosponsor of the legislation

In addition to being a watch dog on Farm Bill implementation issues, I was proud to **introduce HCR 433** to recognize the nation's experimental forests and their contributions to the forestry industry. Mississippi has several experimental forests including one in Holly Springs, MS and Mississippi State University has a premier forestry department which depends on these forests to conduct research in the areas of forest hydrology, forest health, pine forest yield, and forest conservation.

